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I R I S H W O O L L E N W A R E - H O U S E ,

H U M B L Y O F F E R E D

To the Consideration of the Right Honourable and Honourable  
the MEMBERS of the DUBLIN SOCIETY.

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REASONS

FOR A

CONTINUATION

OF THE

TRADE



MARKS

IN THE

IRISH WOOLLEN WARE-HOUSE

HUMBLY OFFERED

To the Consideration of the Right Honourable and Honourable  
the Members of the House of Commons

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## REASONS, &c.

**T**O advance our Manufactures by seasonable Proposals, or to prevent their falling into Decay, by removing Prejudices (which if suffered to prevail might tend to their Destruction) is both a good and necessary Work.

At present, I mean to confine myself to the Woollen Branch, which though under the Patronage of the ever to be honoured *Dublin* Society, has had not only open but secret Enemies, long to struggle with.

The Wisdom of this truly patriotic Society was eminently evinced in the Establishment of the Woollen Ware-house, which but for the insidious Arts of *English* Manufacturers, and the active Co-operation of selfish Individuals among ourselves, had long since fully answered the noble Design of it's generous Protectors. Indeed, every Effect which Selfishness, and the Avarice of *British* Traders could devise, was made in order to render this salutary Plan abortive. Large Capitals enabled them to throw out the Seducement of long Credits, which proved too successful against us.

It was, indeed, reasonable to suppose, that an Institution of this Sort, which should offer honest made Goods, at a much lower Price than ever they had been sold before; and by which none should be imposed upon, would have quickly succeeded. But it was evident, that by thus securing a Trade for our own Manufactures, it would meet with a vigorous Opposition from the Importers.

The latter end of the Year 1772, the *Dublin* Society, justly alarmed at the Prospect of the Decline of the principal Branch of the Woollen Manufacture (the Superfine Trade), resolved to establish

establish a Ware-house for the Sale of *Irish* Woollen Goods for Mens Wear, under proper Regulations, and under the Direction of a Committee of the principal Members of that patriotic Body. Since that Time it has answered every Expectation, by rescuing the fine Trade (for which, under the present Associations, is only in demand) from Destruction, and giving the *Irish* Manufacturer Means to exert his Ability and Ingenuity, in bringing *Irish* Fabrics to as great Perfection as the Goods of any other Country; had it not been in the Line of a Retail House, this could never have been effected, and why? because at that Day, the *English* Clothiers sent over Clerks, and established Houses almost in every Part of the Kingdom, for the Sale of their Goods, but principally for a Species of Second Superfines, highly finished to the Eye, but of a base Fabric, which were commonly sold for 12s. *British*, and sold here as *Irish* for 17s. or 18s. per Yard, which was a large Profit, and more to the Advantage of a Retailer, than the selling the Goods of their own Country, and at this Day, and under the present patriotic Agreement, they have been imposed as the Manufactures of this Country, to the utter Ruin and Scandal of the *Irish* Trade.—A Proof of the above, can be had, if required.

Now let but the Ware-house be changed into the Wholesale Plan only, and we shall soon see our Manufactures go into Decay. The necessary Checks and Restraints on our Retailers will be removed; our Goods would (we may say) lie at their Mercy! The Receipts of ready Money, which diffuse Life and Spirit among Masters and Workmen, and from which so many Advantages and so much Happiness are derived, would be withdrawn.

It has been asserted, that the Ware-house has been the *Damnation* of the Trade, by giving to the Retailer Cause to have imported coarse *English* Woollens, which was never known until the Establishment of that House. I acknowledge this is the Case, but the House was not the Cause; no, the *American* War, the high Insurance on the *Baltic* and *Russian* Trade during the late War, induced the *English* Manufacturers to look for a Market for their Goods in *Ireland*, was what occasioned it, and not the Retail Trade in the Ware-house; and what was the Result, why they established Houses in almost all the principal Towns in  
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the *North of Ireland*, and from their commanding Fortunes were able, though at a loss (for some Time) to undersell us at our own Doors, and consequently eat us out of our own Markets.

The Charge, of only a few Men partaking of the Benefit of the Ware-house, is an absolute Falsehood. This can easily be shewn from the Book of the House; from these it will appear, that frequently in one Week, from 45 to 55 Persons have had their Goods sold in the Ware-house, and many of these nearly on an Equality. Opposition, only, prevented an Extension of this very useful Plan.

It has also been alledged, that the Clothier of small Property has been excluded from any Connection with that House.—This is another gross Falsehood, for the Clothier of small Property partakes in common of the Benefits that are, or may be, derived from the Ware-house; it is not the poor, but the bad or fraudulent Manufacturer that is prevented from the Benefit of that Institution; for suppose he has but two Pieces of Goods, and they happen to be in Demand, and equally good with others, the Goods being so disposed, that each Person has the same fair Chance; a Preference in the Ware-house is given to Merit and Honesty only. Indeed Common Sense will tell us, that a Man who has perhaps 1000*l.* Stock, must sell more than a Person possessed of but 500*l.* but not double. And it hath been very common, that a Man with a well chosen small Assortment of Goods, has sold as much as one with five Times his Stock.

Let us now persevere under the Influence of the present reigning Public Spirit, and cripple the Foreign Imports. By selling our Cloth good and cheap, we shall soon see a quick Consumption; our Looms will encrease; Opposition will give Way to the Protection and Sense of the Public. Much will depend upon the Character of our Goods, and surely they who sell ~~English~~ *English* Cloths for *Irish* (a common Practice) ought to be pointed out to public View, as Enemies to their Country.

Will any impartial Person, conversant in Business, or with the usual Course of Sales in the Ware-house, pretend to say, that if Cloths be well and honestly made, or put in on reasonable Terms, that the middling Class of Manufactures will not receive

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receive more ready Money, than depending on Importers, whose Views and Interests, Connection, and long Credits with, and received from, the *English* Clothiers, which they now particularly give them, must stimulate to damn any Institution that should deprive them of a ready Money Trade? This is evident, and none but such as see through jaundiced Eyes will deny it.

A Wholesale Ware-house must chiefly depend on our Importing Retailers: Farewell then all Hopes of our Woollen Manufacture going on to Perfection. Let us therefore remain on the safe and solid Foundation on which we now stand. Then shall the great Design of the wise and generous Projectors of the Woollen Ware-house be fully answered. Then, also, shall the lower, or poorest of our Clothiers amply experience the Comforts and numerous Benefits that must arise from a well conducted Retail Ware-house.

It has been plausibly urged, that since the Commencement of the Woollen Ware-house, there has been a great Decrease in the Number of Looms, consequently, Numbers of Workmen, thro' Want of Employment, rendered idle and exposed to Want and Beggary. This, however, is but a superficial Objection, and rests not on a solid Basis; because this Decrease may be accounted for from the following Causes.—Every one who has carefully marked the Proceedings relative to the Woollen Branch, must have seen, that immediately on the opening of the Ware-house, the Retailers were alarmed, and gave it every Opposition. The *English* Clothiers knowing this, powerfully stimulated them to persevere, and offered them longer Credits than ever had been heard of, in order to frustrate the Designs of the *Dublin* Society, under whose Auspices the Ware-house was opened. The War with *America*, and loss of the *Levant* Trade having deeply affected the Woollen Branch of *Britain*, increased the Activity of the *English* Manufacturers, in extending the great Staple of *England* in this Kingdom. Too many ~~of~~ Retailers became their Agents, and even hurt the Character of *Irish* Cloths, by selling flimsy old Shopkeepers, which in fact were *English* Goods, for *Irish*. The Vanity and Inconsideration likewise, of Numbers, led them to a culpable Fondness of Foreign Fabrics.—Add to this, that on several Occasions,  
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since the Commencement of the Woollen Ware-house, hard inclement Seasons have rendered Provisions, and Life's Necessaries, very exorbitant in their Prices; to which, it is evident, some avaricious unfeeling Landlords, with their rapacious Agents, and the oppressive Fraternity of Foresters have not a little contributed. But indeed, if we attentively mark the astonishing Progress of Importations of old and new *English* Drapery since the Year 1772, it will nearly account for the Decline of our Manufactures, which but for the Stand made by the Woollen Ware-house, and the ready Money there received, must have been in a much worse Condition than they are at present. Nay, were the retail Trade terminated at the Ware-house; did the same artful Efforts of *British* Clothiers continue, and be co-operated with by our Retailers, it is to be feared, that the Woollen Branch in this Kingdom would quickly go into decay, and additional Thousands suffer accumulated Wants and Distresses.—Unquestionably, an increase of Capital in this Kingdom, in order to extend Manufactures, will be necessary. This must arise from Exertions of Genius, and of an Industry, active and unremitting;—also from public Encouragements properly applied.—It were likewise happy, if it could be made the *Interest* of our Retailers to deal chiefly in *Irish* Goods, because, without this, neither public Spirit, nor Love to their Country, would probably prove efficient Principles. But, surely, the mere Prosperity of Retailers, ought not, in an enlarged national View, be deemed a primary Consideration; but the Extension of the Woollen Branch on a firm, permanent Foundation, so as to contribute to the general Welfare of the Community at large. Local Interests and Prejudices must be surmounted. But, no doubt, the Wisdom of the Legislature, and Patriotism of the Right Honourable and Honourable the *Dublin* Society, will duly consider of, and regulate these Matters.—Let it farther be attended to, that our Importations from *Great Britain* for nine Years, from 1774 to 1783, amounted, upon an Average, to about Two Millions Sterling annually. Join to this, the Drains made by Absentees, and how depressed our Situation?

This could not but throw a large Balance in Trade against us, with an high Exchange, which carried away in large Quantities  
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of our circulating Cash.—Hence Distress pervaded different commercial Departments; our Manufactures, in general, were deeply affected, particularly the Woollen Branch, as the Value of *British* Woollen Goods constituted a large Part of the above enormous Sum.

Perhaps the above Particulars may receive Strength, when it is considered, that in 1780, the Value of old and new Drapery imported from *England* was only 64,970l.—But, that in the Year 1781, 1782, and 1783, the Value of the same Articles imported, was, upon an Average, about 312,000l. annually. So quick and so amazing a Rise, can only be attributed to the not having continued the Non-importation Agreement, which had been entered into in 1779; for when we relaxed in this, *English* Goods poured in upon us from every Manufacturing Town, as the advanced Importations in 1781, 1782, and 1783, above mentioned, plainly shew. But from the whole it is evident, that our Retail Woollen Ware-house contributed not in the least to these *Importations Extraordinary*.

I have been the more explicit in this Matter, as I know it was thought to be a formidable Objection, and by some, great Stress was laid upon it; but, indeed the Objections that have hitherto been offered against the Ware-house, are principally of the flimsy superficial Kind, proceeding from selfish Views.—When Facts are applied to them, they quickly vanish.

It is therefore hoped, that as the Matter to be determined is of the utmost Importance to the Kingdom in general, and the Happiness of Thousands will depend on the Decision, that it will be in favour of a Retail House.

Cannot we, therefore, under such an Accumulation of unfortunate Circumstances, account for the Encrease of idle Looms and of unemployed Workmen?

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